

2/-

'We shall toddle off to-morrow
From this scene of sin and sorrow
For to settle in the town of Basingstoke'

'Ruddigore'

Gilbert & Sullivan



BASINGSTOKE

A SOCIAL STUDY

BASINGSTOKE

A Social Study

published by

Workers' Educational Association, Southern District

Preface

This study of Basingstoke is the work of W.E.A. class-members over the last four years and complements the work of a similar group which studied the economic implications of the expansion of the town. It represents a very considerable effort on the part of a small group of people whose interest was originally aroused—and stimulated when necessary—by the tutor, Mr. Maurice Broady. We should like to thank others who have contributed to the enquiry by generously supplying information and patiently answering questions. The University of Southampton gave financial support to the sessional classes where much of the work was done and the staff of the Department of Adult Education have helped Mr. Broady and class members in assembling the material for publication.

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The following were at various times members of Mr. Broady's class:

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THE ABSENCE OF ANY LOCAL PATRIOTISM

Past experience offers no solution

Domesday Book describes Basingstoke as a town of 48 families; its total population no doubt numbered between 200 and 250 persons. By 1801, when the first census was taken, the population was 2,600. A hundred years later it had increased to nearly 10,000 and by 1951 it was 17,000. Since then the town has grown rapidly. In the ten-year period from 1951 to 1961, the population increased by over fifty per cent. The bulk of that increase was by *private* immigration, mainly from the London area. In 1961, however, an agreement was reached between the Borough Council, the Hampshire County Council and the London County Council, which provided for the development of the town as an over-spill reception area. As a result of that agreement, the population of Basingstoke is planned to grow by 1977 from the present figure of 30,000 to 75,000.

The present expansion of the town is unprecedented in its long history. This means that problems are likely to develop for which the past experience of the town offers no solution. Nevertheless, there is no shortage of experience elsewhere, and this report is based upon an intensive study of the experience of other British towns which, since 1945, have already undergone a process of rapid expansion similar to that which Basingstoke is now facing. It is the work of a study group set up by the Basingstoke Branch of the Workers' Educational Association with Maurice Broady, lecturer in Sociology at Southampton University, as its tutor. In it, we have tried to state what the social consequences of this

rapid growth are likely to be and to make some positive recommendations about how the problems that will inevitably arise can best be dealt with. Throughout we have tried to think not only of how these immediate problems might be alleviated but also of how to create a new community in which the citizens of Basingstoke, old and new alike, shall lead full and satisfying lives.

Three problems

The basic problems arise directly from the process of moving. Mass movements of population of this kind invariably give rise to three kinds of social tension.

Firstly, each successive wave of newcomers has to make social and personal adjustments to a new environment; secondly, there will be misunderstanding, and even antagonism between "old" and "new" inhabitants and, thirdly, there is the absence of any common feeling of belonging to Basingstoke: no emotional involvement with place or people: no local patriotism.

There are, therefore, three main problems:

- (a) How to help the newcomers to settle in and to feel at home in Basingstoke.
- (b) How to foster good relations between the older residents and the newcomers.
- (c) How to create a lively social, sporting and cultural life, and to encourage the new residents to take a pride in their town.

At the outset it is probably well to observe that a concern for people *as* people may well be low down on any list of governmental priorities in any town expansion scheme. How to relieve traffic congestion and provide new roads; how to ensure an adequate water supply; how to relate the building of houses to the industrial development programme: these are all problems which are easily recognised and with which the existing administrative machinery may be expected to deal. With genuinely human problems it is rather different. People are likely to ask "What are *they* doing about it?", but the statutory authorities for their part may well feel that individual problems are no concern of theirs. But this is hardly just. For these problems are real enough even though they cannot be precisely costed, and it is most important that they should be recognised as presenting a major challenge to the initiative and ingenuity of the local authorities just as much as of the ordinary people of Basingstoke.



The newcomers

The first problem concerns the social and personal adjustment of families and individuals. In general, the newcomers will be young people with families. They will have come, many of them, because the firm which employs them is leaving London for new



YOUNG PEOPLE
WITH FAMILIES

premises on one of our industrial estates. For some, the move brings a chance of promotion, but most move primarily in order to get a decent house with a garden after years of living in sub-standard housing or with parents or in-laws. Very few will come because they have consciously chosen Basingstoke as the town above all others in which they wish to live: if circumstances had been different, they

could as easily have gone to Bletchley or Bury St. Edmunds.

For whatever reason they move they are likely to be in many ways much better off in Basingstoke. They will in all likelihood have a better house than before in a cleaner, brighter town. But they will undoubtedly face a number of difficulties, especially in the initial period of settling in. The experience of the new towns has shown that the move often involves people in increased financial outlays. Nor is this surprising. Better housing has to be paid for in higher rents. The new house requires curtains, carpets and furniture, while many women are put under some pressure to keep up with their neighbours. The cost of bus fares into the town centre will have to be added to the shopping bill, which in any event is likely to be higher than in London where keener competition between shopkeepers tends to reduce the cost of living. New arrangements will have to be made with doctors and dentists and clinics, with milkmen and grocers and bakers, with H.P. salesmen and rent collectors. The old comfortable routines will have been broken and new ones must be established in the new life. The man who likes his glass of beer will have to find a new "local" which will not be round the corner but in the centre of the town, where, for a good many evenings, he will continue to feel a stranger. New problems will also crop up.

If the parents occasionally want to go to the cinema, who will sit with the children? Where is the cinema, anyway? Gone are all the old friends and relations; and in their place are new neighbours who may well be occupied with their own affairs.

Broadly speaking, we are usually most at our ease when we are in familiar surroundings, knowing our neighbours and with our friends near at hand, ready and willing to be called on in an emergency. How different is the situation of a family in their first few weeks on one of our new estates!

It is little wonder, therefore, that, under similar circumstances in many rapidly expanding towns, the incidence of neuroses and nervous disorders has been sufficiently high in the first year or so to cause doctors and social workers some concern. Our own inquiry into the initial adjustment of people in four new estates in the town showed a marked disinclination on the part of newcomers to "join in" social



DISINCLINATION TO JOIN

activities. Many people were so heavily engaged in their private affairs that they had just not begun to take up the many outside interests which had previously been an important part of their lives. In other towns it has been noted that incoming families usually take up to two years to settle before they join associations outside the home, with the exception of pressure groups, such as tenants' associations, which are set up in order to deal with specific and immediate local problems.

The difficulties of this initial adjustment must not be exaggerated. Most families will be able to sort out their problems and settle down fairly speedily. But in every new community there is always a minority who are likely to be overwhelmed with difficulties that the more resilient or more experienced will barely notice. There is no doubt that the housewife is put under greater stress in this early phase than is her husband. For while he will have the company of his colleagues at work, his wife, if she is at home all day, is more prone to loneliness and carries the heavier burden of caring for the children. We are concerned about this for mainly humanitarian reasons. But perhaps a more compelling argument for *doing* something about it is that failure to provide the necessary help to such families in the *early* phases of adjustment will in the end impose a greater burden on the community by way of medical, social and even psychiatric care.

What can be done to alleviate these problems? Even *before* they make the final decision to move, the newcomers should be given a clear idea of the life they will be living and what Basingstoke will be like to live in. This can be done either by the Borough

Council or the incoming industry, or both. It may take the form of meetings in London with representatives of the local authority or visits by coach for conducted tours of the town. At Crawley, for example, this policy has been carried out by the Housing Officer with very good results, and has already been adopted in Basingstoke.

Secondly, when the newcomer is handed his keys and walks into his new house, a welcome and a list of all the organisations, official addresses, societies and clubs in the town is now a "must". In other towns, Rotary for instance, have organised welcoming committees, but in most cases this is done by the local authority. Crawley's policy, again, has been to encourage the rent-collectors to establish friendly personal relations with the new citizens, so that they have at least one local authority officer to turn to for



FRIENDLY RELATIONS
WITH RENT COLLECTOR

advice on the new problems they are facing. Elsewhere, notably in Stevenage and Harlow, this work has been done by social development officers, who are responsible for community development and public relations. These officials need to be able not only to do the job, but to do it well. We were greatly impressed by the outstanding personal quality of those officers who came to Basingstoke at our invitation or whom we met on the study tour which the group ran in 1963. Their work involves promoting informal social activities and acting as a link between individuals and various voluntary groups on the one hand, and the many branches of officialdom on the other. It is, therefore, important that such an officer, once appointed, should be free to act on his own initiative and not have to refer every decision to the Town Hall for ratification. In this way, statutory and voluntary effort is most likely to be effectively co-ordinated to ensure the greatest well-being of the growing community.

Some people, of course, may argue that this is too paternalistic by half. They might say that these problems of initial adjustment would eventually sort themselves out and that people do not need to be helped in this way. But throwing people in at the deep end is not the best way to teach people to swim; and where new communities are being created artificially, the local authorities are under an obligation to use every means to ease the strains that such a process inevitably sets up *and* foster the positive welfare of the community.

Clearly, the employers are as much concerned with the move as their employees. Industry, accordingly, finds itself involved in the lives of the workers in ways undreamt of in London. Personnel officers have been appointed to handle the details of moving, to advise staff about the disadvantages as well as the advantages of the new life, and to take up staff problems with the appropriate authorities in the new area, and generally to act as a recognised channel between these authorities and the newcomers. There is much that enlightened employers can do to help the adjustment of their employees. Once established, firms may decide to set up sports and social clubs, and then to equip them with playing fields and club rooms. For many years, local industry has made a substantial contribution to the social well-being of the town. Thornycroft's, for example, have supported the football team as well as a flourishing operatic society while our delightful cricket ground attests the generosity of John May, the local brewer, who gave it to the town towards the end of the last century. Valuable though all this is, it has its dangers. For, in this way, the newcomer may soon find that his whole world is encompassed by the factory which employs him. This situation, while helping people to feel at home, can also hinder the integration of the newcomers and the larger community.

The churches are a third force which can help to weld the immigrants into a new community. Despite their diminished importance they still claim the allegiance of one person in every five and in many ways continue to affect all our lives. Here in Basingstoke the churches have already begun to establish themselves in the new areas. In some cases, they have resident clergy, but usually their facilities are limited to a temporary hut which will in time be replaced by a new church and church hall. Perhaps we should remind ourselves here that although the Christian should be recognised by his care for his neighbour, the Church's concern is for spiritual affairs before social ones. The work of a clergyman in a new area is uphill work. There is a good deal of evidence to support the view that newcomers, with the possible exception of members of the Roman Catholic community, will take some time before they rejoin a church in Basingstoke. Even



CHURCHES ESTABLISHING THEMSELVES IN NEW AREAS

people who have been active in church affairs in the town from which they came, may well wish to avoid taking on similar commitments here unless given encouragement to do so. It is therefore of the utmost importance that each newcomer should receive a personal welcome and invitation. This is work which the layman should undertake, if only because the amount of door-to-door visiting required is far too much for any one clergyman to do. At best, the churches should combine to do this work, each visitor passing on the names of those church people who are not members of his particular denomination.

But whatever help might be given to the newcomers, perhaps the most important question is what can be done to enable them to help themselves. Undoubtedly, they are most likely to come together first of all, in order to object to the conditions under which they live. Almost certainly, there will be legitimate cause for complaint and, as elsewhere, this will lead to "ginger" groups being formed to press home the complaints in the right quarter. These groups will, in time tend to die out whether or not they succeed in getting things improved or become discouraged at being able to do nothing. But they will have served the purpose of bringing people together, who will then set up the horticultural societies, darts clubs and all the many groups found in a modern urban community. This is a natural reaction which should be encouraged. This means that meeting places should be provided early in the development of housing schemes. The English climate rules out the likelihood of much good coming from a open air meeting.

This raises a more general point. The provision of facilities in the town for entertainment, sports and social life at the same time as the homes and factories are built, will materially help to create an atmosphere in which the newcomers will settle down easily. We shall return to this point again later in the report, but it cannot be said too often that the successful implementation of the master plan will do a great deal to ease the period of transition and to build up a feeling of pride in the town. Far too often the provision of these facilities lags far behind the growth of housing so that when the *advantages* of re-development are mentioned it is the occasion for hollow laughter. Young people will complain most loudly of the lack of bowling alleys and dance halls compared with the areas they come from, and if there is no chance to be absorbed into a new life, this could be the excuse to drift into hooliganism and petty crime.

Basingstokers

What, then, of the "Basingstokers", the men and women who have been born and brought up in the town and who still give it a great deal of its character? They still remember it as a quiet market town, where the changes that took place were so gradual that one hardly noticed them: a town where you knew almost everybody you met in the street. Some Basingstoke families have lived here for many generations. They will be understandably distressed to see all the old familiar landmarks disappearing and to know that soon the centre of the town will be turned into a vast building site to be rebuilt in ferro-concrete. In these circumstances, they may perhaps be pardoned for feeling some resentment



REBUILT IN FERRO CONCRETE

at the radical change that is being wrought in the old town they have known for so long and for being tempted to focus that resentment on the newcomers. And it will not be easy for them to welcome these vast changes which they never asked for and from which they will perhaps derive less benefit than others. There are also all those people who have moved into the town since the end of the last war. They are made up of the scientists at Aldermaston, who are mostly to be found on the Oakridge estate, of the members of various professions who have moved into the older parts of the town and the inhabitants of the new private estates. They originally came to Basingstoke to retire, to work locally or to commute into London. They came because houses were available at prices they could afford, and presumably in making their decision they accepted Basingstoke as the quiet country town it then was. To this group, too, it comes as a shock to find that the rural Basingstoke into which they moved is about to disappear, and a still greater shock to learn that their estates of privately-owned houses are now to be surrounded by council houses. They have a very real fear that the value of their property will drop and their gardens will be despoiled by young hooligans. And these fears take on a highly emotional content as protest meetings are held, and social snobbery accentuates the potential friction between themselves and the *new* newcomers.

None of these groups—the old-timers, the newcomers in the private estates and the *real* newcomers—has much in common

with the others, but the future well-being of the town will depend to a large extent on their successful integration into one community.

Positive measures towards integration

It is easy to say that given the right spirit by all parties and a positive determination to exercise toleration and seek friendship, all difficulties could be solved. It would also be quite true. But it is also possible to suggest areas of possible contact and positive measures which would help towards integration.

In the first place, it is important that the interests of the older inhabitants should not be forgotten. Indeed, the provision for their housing and welfare, which has been a feature of life in Basingstoke through the ages, should be continued and extended. The community, operating both through the Council and through private voluntary activities, must not only act impartially and fairly between newcomer and old inhabitant, but must be seen to do so.

The churches have perhaps the greatest opportunity to weld together the three basic groups of people. Their role, however, must be positive. They should try to build bridges between old and new by deliberately proposing joint tasks to be undertaken and by creating opportunities for people to meet one another. There is no substitute for the personal introduction. It is so easy for people living in one part of the town to contribute most generously to the building of a new church in another part without being in any way personally involved. In the same way, the loyal supporters of a new church can sometimes be made to feel like strangers among other members of the congregation of the parent church who may have known each other for a lifetime; and they are likely to resent their subordinate position in the church's social hierarchy. We feel strongly that these matters should be given very serious attention.

The largest field for contact between old and new is probably to be found in the offices and workshops on the industrial estates. All the firms which have moved to Basingstoke have also recruited local staff to work alongside the Londoners. There is no better or quicker way of breaking down the barriers that separate people than working together as equals at the same job. However, this calls for scrupulous and unwavering impartiality on the part of management. It would also help if the social facilities of the



WORKING TOGETHER AS
EQUALS AT THE SAME JOB

factory could be opened as far as possible to men and women who are not their employees but who could benefit from and contribute to them. Given the outlook we are sure that the residents and newcomers will get to know and like each other against the industrial background. With this should go a warning that extreme discontent on the new estates could be vented against "locals"

who were met at work, causing people to form into groups and cause friction in a difficult situation.

The example of political parties may well be borne in mind in this connexion. A party at the height of its power is invariably united; broken and out of office it divides into a series of warring factions. In developing this unity, it is essential to have good leadership at the top. The rapid and smooth implementation of all aspects of the development plan will sweep aside problems of social discontent and integration as it goes. "Nothing succeeds like success."

Yet all this will be wasted if the public cannot pass judgment on the success of the town's development; this requires good channels of communication between them and the planners. Much has been done by successive Mayors and the local papers to keep the public informed about the progress of development. We would argue for more of this, in spite of the manifest advantages of planning carried out behind closed doors, secure from the embarrassing distraction of prejudiced pressure groups and special interests. We would welcome a genuine attempt to publish information of future proposals and explain the thinking that precedes the plan so that the public could see and comment on the pattern of development before it is crystallised into firm proposals which "cannot now be changed".

Civic pride

The third problem is an absence of local patriotism. Neither old or new townsfolk seem to feel that the new Basingstoke is going to be a town to be proud of. For the future development of the town, this calls for some attention.

There are two main steps which need to be taken: the first is so to organise the physical growth and the social services of the town that there is the very least possible amount of unhappiness

and unpleasantness; and the second is to ensure that the vast resources of human effort and enthusiasm which can thus be made available can find a satisfying purpose and outlet in social activity of all kinds.

The role of the Town Development Joint Committee is crucial for the success or failure of the whole operation. At every turn we meet a need for official action or sanction to finance, to lead, to co-ordinate, to guide, to authorise, to permit. Initially this is a matter of co-ordinated physical planning but much more than physical development is involved. Of course, roads and sewers, houses, factories and schools must all be built in the most convenient relationship with each other. Clearly the geographical layout must conform to rational ideas about the separation of pedestrians from vehicles and so on. Yet it is quite mistaken to suppose that physical planning of itself will ensure a good and well-integrated community. Happy neighbourliness will not be guaranteed simply by placing twenty houses around an inward-looking close. Twenty closes grouped around a primary school and a handful of shops may help towards, but are not likely by themselves to produce, a "sense of community". Twice twenty such groups around a shoppers' paradise will not make a living town. Planning must go further: it must extend into the sphere of social administration and consider how the voluntary social activities in the town can best be fostered and encouraged.

What factors, then, foster a lively spirit in the town and civic pride in its citizens? Let us start with some general principles. What we are concerned with are the activities of groups of people within the community. Most people seem to prefer to limit their social life to the family circle than to participate in a wider range of social activities. A recent study in Crawley showed that only thirty per cent of the population belonged to any of the large number of thriving voluntary societies in the town. We are also concerned with the quality of those activities, whether they be the local football team or the concert club. For it is upon their quality that the reputation of the town will depend, and its citizens are more likely to be proud of a town with a high reputation. We should also bear in mind that as working hours decrease, opportunities for the use of leisure time will become more important in any community. The activities which people engage in after the working day is over are many and various. They may involve service to the community through membership of the Borough Council or a group like the Round

Table which combines service with a vigorous social life; it may be cultural or educational, or again it may be membership of a darts club or a football team.

Wide range of clubs and societies

Basingstoke already has a very wide range of clubs and societies, and there should be no difficulty for the newcomer to find one which will meet his interests. They nearly all share two problems in common; the need for better premises to meet in and the need to increase their membership. On both counts they would be wise to offer a sincere welcome to the newcomer. Quality will come by building on existing foundations rather than obliging newcomers to form independent associations or splinter groups. Already new tenants receive a list of organisations in the town when they move in, but this is not enough. We have found in our own group that new members have usually joined through personal introductions and this is likely to be the case generally. Furthermore, all societies should be considering what expansion implies for their activities. In some cases such as Scout groups for example, it means a complete re-organisation. More may be required of them than simply welcoming new members. For the newcomers will also expect to be eligible for election to committees and to have their say in deciding policy. The whole point should be to afford every opportunity for the abilities of people now coming into the town to be released constructively.

A great deal of potential is already being lost simply because there are very few houses in the town which can be offered for sale, because many people moving into the town neither wish nor are eligible to be council tenants. Almost without exception, the managerial staff of the new industries have found homes in places such as Fleet, Tadley, Kingsclere or even further afield. They are therefore not eligible to serve on the Council or to vote in local elections, and are perhaps more likely to become active in the affairs of the district where their home is situated than in the town where they earn their living. It would clearly be undesirable if the Borough were to be given over exclusively to estates of council houses while more exclusive housing for the "bosses" took place predominantly in the surrounding villages.

Already Basingstoke can boast of a number of voluntary organisations which perform valuable jobs on the side of the statutory social services. There is, as one example, the Citizens' Advice Bureau, which was established a year or two ago. These

bodies, however, are hampered in two ways. In the first place, they are often badly housed in out-of-the-way buildings, so that their existence is not as widely known as it should be to many people who could benefit from their help. Secondly, to be efficient, their work depends on developing contacts with the local authorities and kindred organisations, and so far there has been no proper machinery for this purpose. We are therefore delighted that there has now been set up a Basingstoke Council of Social Service. This Council will now be able to draw the voluntary social services together so that they can pool their knowledge and resources, as well as spark off new ventures in the field of social welfare. Indeed, it might be possible for this group to act in relation to this new Council as a research and information agency producing, at regular intervals, reports on social issues of current importance. In any event, the establishment of the Council should give the voluntary bodies a better standing with the statutory bodies and foster the most effective co-operation between them.

Ideally, it should be housed in one easily recognised building in the centre of the town in which all the voluntary agencies could have a share, and pool their secretarial arrangements. Such a centre has proved most successful at Stevenage; and it is obvious that we need to make the maximum use of our resources by co-ordination and every other means, if we are to meet the demands which will be made upon them in the years that lie ahead.

The town centre

When Basingstoke Town Map was first published, in 1962, its most striking feature was the town centre. As the public sees it, the original conception seems to have been very much watered down. If this *is* so, it could adversely affect any attempt to build a vigorous town life. In Crawley, where for many years only shops were built at the town centre, each neighbourhood unit developed its separate social and cultural life until the town appeared to be little more than a cluster of villages, rather than a town with a coherence of its own. Once such a state of affairs is firmly established, it is not at all easy to change.

Many people have criticised the shopping facilities of Basingstoke. Indeed, the town is reputed to be one of the most expensive in the South of England, and many more enterprising shopkeepers have been frustrated in attempts to expand their premises and

services to meet the ever-growing demand. It is no use simply urging tradesmen to welcome and encourage their new customers since that is clearly in their own interest. Equally clearly, the merriest greeting is no substitute for swift service and keen prices. But for traders and their customers alike what is needed is a well-planned and convenient commercial centre which can define the heart of the growing town and give it some vitality. This is relevant not only to retailers. Barbers, publicans, cinema managers, shoemenders and the proprietors of restaurants and fried fish shops all appreciate that the vigour of their business, in the end, depends upon our joint efforts to make Basingstoke a good and exciting place to live in.

The Arts

The cultural life of Basingstoke is equally important. The borough can claim a range of cultural organisations that many a large town would be proud of, among them the Concert Club, the Choral Society, the Art Club and the Haymarket Theatre. The way in which the Haymarket Theatre is run by voluntary council backed financially by the Borough Council, is a fine example of co-operation between a statutory body and a voluntary society which might well be emulated in other contexts. But much could be done architecturally, if the Haymarket Theatre were to be linked with the Town Hall and proper provision made for musical concerts. There should also be a first-class public library, a gallery in which travelling exhibitions and the work of the many local artists could be displayed, together with a new museum, all re-housed in buildings of which Basingstoke would be proud.

The town already has a vigorous branch of the Workers' Educational Association. Classes are run in school classrooms, public halls and private houses in different parts of the town. The study-group has visited the educational centres which have been established in Reading and Worthing. It is clear that these centres have helped the growth of cultural activities and we believe the time is ripe for such a centre to be established here. The W.E.A. itself has recently drawn attention to the long history of this town and the many fine



ELEGANCE UNRECOGNISED IN
MODERN ARCHITECTURE

old Georgian buildings with their memories of Jane Austen and the coaching days which will shortly disappear. A splendid opportunity exists to rescue at least one of these houses on the fringe of the re-development area, and restore it as a home for educational and cultural pursuits which the W.E.A. could share with other bodies with similar interests. Apart from its value for this purpose, it would also act as a reminder of the many men and women who have given something to the life of the town through the centuries and an example of the elegance and character which the public often find hard to recognise in modern architecture.

Sport

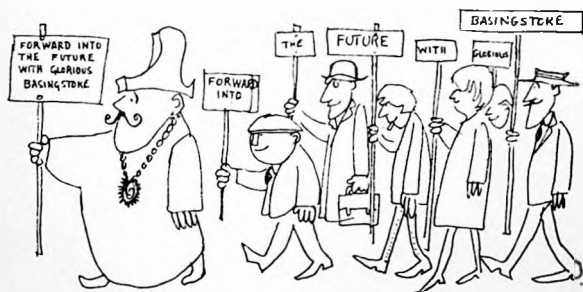
Basingstoke already has the provision for sports facilities well in hand. Playing fields are being laid out in the new housing areas, and the proposed sports centre, details of which were announced recently by the Sports Trust, under the chairmanship of Lord Porchester, should give a vitality to the centre of the town not known before. At the time of going to press it is too early to judge how far the Government's economy measures will delay the construction of this building which will provide under one roof, swimming pools, squash and tennis courts and general facilities for a wide variety of indoor sports, as well as being a social meeting place. Although older people will derive little benefit from these amenities, the knowledge that younger generations will be growing up in a town designed for their needs should be some compensation for their own losses.

Sport is very much a field where the newcomers, coming, as they do, from areas with much larger populations and therefore keener competition, will set new and higher standards; and as Basingstoke gains a reputation for prowess in sport, this will enhance the morale of a wide section of the population, while sporting events themselves will bring together people from different areas of the town. In the same way, the Basingstoke Carnival, which already has the reputation of being one of the best in the south of England, is one institution in which all sections of the community readily participate.

Summing up

What then, in brief, are we saying? We are saying simply this. That the object which we should set should be to encourage people to contribute to the future social development of Basingstoke in every possible way. This means that proper facilities should be provided in good time and that the maximum use

should be made of existing resources. It calls for the closest co-operation and understanding between the statutory authorities and the voluntary societies, and between the voluntary societies themselves. It means not only an expression of goodwill towards the newcomer, but a genuine attempt both to welcome the new people and to afford them opportunities to exercise their own abilities at all levels inside our existing organisations. Given these conditions, we see no reason why Basingstoke should not become, in the not too distant future, a pace-setter among comparable towns in this part of the country.



Cartoons drawn by DAVID AUSTIN

Printed in Great Britain by
CHARLES SKIPPER & EAST LTD
KINGSLERE ROAD, BASINGSTOKE

